

Map and Summary **2009 Update**

About Greenways and Trails

A greenway can be land-or water-based. It can



The Need for a Regional **Greenways and Trails Plan**

A greenways and trails plan offers a vision of continuous greenway and trail corridors linked across jurisdictions, providing scenic beauty, natural habitat, and/or recreational opportunities for our communities. Many jurisdictions govern land use and landscape design in northeastern Illinois, so developing a regionally coordinated and connected vision of greenways and trails across these urisdictions can inform local land use decisions, hopefully while inspiring decisions about development that are consistent with the greenways and trails identified. In addition, greenways and trails projects, including land acquisition, can enhance our communities. Greenway projects inspired by this plan offer some combination of the following characteristics:

- Benefits large populations in multiple communities
- Bridges gaps to help complete greenways
- Creates new connections between greenways
- Provides wildlife migration paths between isolated
- Protects tributary streams to preserve water quality and ecological value in main regional waterways
- Improves access to recreational trails where it is currently

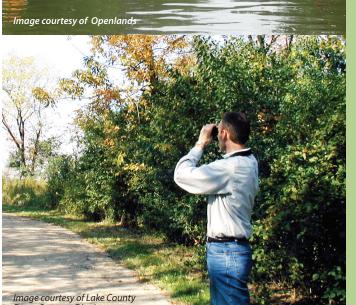
Protects residential and commercial areas threatened by

- Protects high quality natural areas threatened
- by development Protects important scenic vistas and historic areas
- Increases access to open space for mature and distressed communities with disadvantaged populations
- Offers a variety of recreational uses

from development

 Provides alternative transportation routes (walking, bicycling) and improves access to public transportation



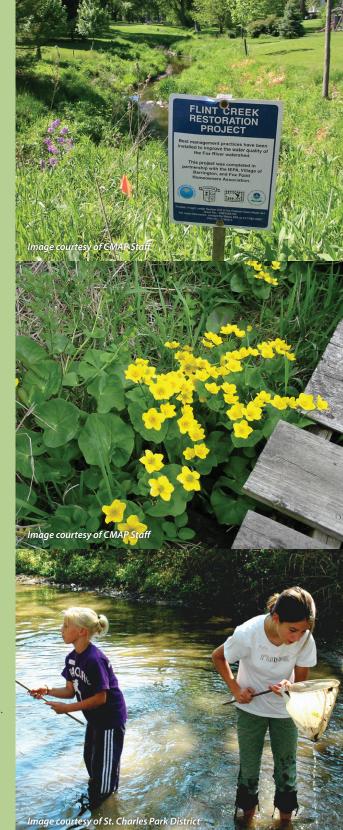


A Changing Environment for **Greenway Planning**

The Northeastern Illinois Greenways and Trails Plan was first adopted in 1992 and then updated in 1997. Changes in northeastern Illinois have brought on the need to update the plan. For one, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) was created in 2005 as the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. By state and federal law, CMAP is responsible for developing GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first truly comprehensive regional plan. To be implemented starting in fall 2010, the plan will be based on a diverse, coordinated set of strategies for transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. By incorporating the Greenways and Trails Plan as part of the overall vision for 2040, CMAP's **GO TO 2040** plan will strengthen and support the implementation of proposed regional trails and greenways.

There are additional changes that can have a positive impact on the implementation of the Greenways and Trails Plan: Kendall county has become part of the northeastern Illinois planning area; the serious water supply concerns n this region are beginning to be addressed through the Regional Water Supply Planning initiative; residents of northeastern Illinois are facing health concerns related to physical inactivity, which can be addressed by providing more recreational opportunities and connections to the natural environment; and, as awareness of the need to address climate change increases, so does recognition of the value of greenways in sequestering carbon and promoting walking and biking over automobile use to essen our region's carbon emissions. Additionally, greenways can be a viable use for some contaminated sites after they are cleaned up.

The 100th anniversary of Burnham and Bennett's 1909 Plan of Chicago also brings to the fore historic initiatives and visionary goals for the region concerning nature, open space, and green corridors, including the establishment of forest preserves, improvement of the lakefront, and efforts to develop and protect a system of connected open spaces. The public's enthusiasm about this anniversary could have a lasting impact on the realization of Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Plan.



This map updates existing and proposed regional greenways and trails, open space, and connections among them. It includes the locations of Illinois Nature Preserves and sites on the Illinois and county Natural Areas Inventories. Many of these high-quality areas are within designated greenways or existing open space and need to be protected. The regional trail system may, where appropriate, provide opportunities for viewing these areas, but care must be taken to protect fragile natural area resources from adverse impacts. Unprotected natural areas sites need to be given preservation status through acquisition or other means, as appropriate.

and the trails that are shown as existing are completed and open to the public. Proposed trails as illustrated are largely conceptual and final alignment would be determined by the jurisdiction through its planning and engineering processes. A more detailed map and database are available from CMAP to coordinate such planning. While some of the connecting trail proposals that are fairly close together are shown as one corridor on the map, the greenway are fairly close together are shown as one corridor on the map, the greenway

Stream Greenways are a vital part of this plan; they are focal points for environmental education and stewardship; they can provide valued opportunities for canoeing and kayaking; they can be rich centers of biodiversity; and they can provide important water quality, water supply and flood mitigation functions. All streams in this plan are considered existing or proposed greenways.

Trail Greenways offer, for most of their length, a "green" experience and include relatively large amounts of vegetation or scenic vistas. Off-road paths along a highly developed corridor with very little vegetation for example are not shown with a green buffer.

the "backbone" of the trail network, which also includes important existing and proposed trails that make critical links and interconnections. Trails that connect the regional system, forest preserves and conservation areas are identified as primary; trail loops within forest preserves and conservation areas that Connections that follow more circuitous routes and those that would depend on development of a number of adjacent trails to connect to the major trails are not included. The Primary System designation does not necessarily indicate priority trails for development, however many coincide with the county priorities listed

The Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan is a regional system of existing and proposed trails for non-motorized boating. It provides

a framework for trail development on over 500 miles of streams and lakes on 10 major waterways including Lake Michigan, Fox River, Chicago River, Des Plaines River, Salt Creek, DuPage River, Nippersink Creek, Kishwaukee River, Calumet Area Waterways, and the Kankakee River. One hundred and sixty-six access and portage sites are proposed to connect the system, of which 110 have been established (see inset map). For more information and the full-sized map, visit http://openlands.org/index.php/Greenways/Projects/northeastern-illinois-water-<u>trails.html</u>

Conceptual map of the Route 66 and Grand Illinois Trails*



*map does not distinguish between existing and proposed segments

The Grand Illinois Trail (GIT) is a 500-mile loop for hiking and biking that uses existing trails (and will use planned ones) in northeastern Illinois, as shown on the main map. Major greenway plan trails are included in this loop, as well as some signed on-road routes essential to creating the loop. The entire GIT in Northeastern Illinois is included on the map.

The Route 66 Trail (off-road segments only) is a plan to give trail users opportunities to explore sights, cities, towns, and rural areas of Route 66. The vision consists of off-road paths and comfortable roads for bicycles, equestrians, hikers. In cases where the route coincides with major greenway trails, it is identified on this map, while on-road segments are not included. The route consists of both existing and proposed segments as shown on the main map.



Image courtesy of the Forest Preserve District of Will County



The Plan Document

Objective 1:

Objective 2:

Objective 4:

Objective 6:

Objective 7:

An important function of the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan and the plan map is to support the programs of open space jurisdictions which are working to preserve and manage greenway corridors.

Much of the on-the-ground implementation will occur through the initiative of the forest preserve and conservation districts, park districts, municipalities, counties, and state and federal agencies, including the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Department of Transportation. The open space, outdoor recreation, and natural resource advocacy outdoor recreation, and natural resource advocacy organizations of the region play an invaluable role ir

*This summary is intended as an overview of the CMAP's website at www.cmap.illinois.gov.

For more specific information about regional existing or proposed trails, such as where proposals originated, contact CMAP at 312-454-0400.

About CMAP

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official comprehensive regional plannin nization for the seven counties of northeaste organization for the seven counties of northeastern Illinois. CMAP's innovative *GO TO 2040* planning campaign is developing and implementing strategies to address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality of life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for







Image courtesy of Scott Evans